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1989/06/28

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ACTION EAP-00

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ACTION OFFICE CM-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
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INFO AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
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SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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AMCONSUL CHENGDU POUCH

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RSC FOR DOUG PAUL

CINCPAC FOR FPA FINNEY

E.O. 12356:DECL:OADR

TAGS: PGOV, PMUN, 'SOCT', CM

REF: (U) BEIJING 16971; (U) BEIJING 16246

SUBJECT: TSCN01 -- TIANANMEN, JUNE 3-4; A PERSONAL
ACCOUNT

1. CONFIDENTIAL.

2. THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS CONOFF'S EYEWITNESS
ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS IN THE TIANANMEN VICINITY ON
THE NIGHT OF JUNE 3-4. THIS ACCOUNT, WRITTEN ON JUNE
4, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EVENTS OF THE PRECEDING
NIGHT, IS BEING SENT NOW TO CLARIFY THE EVENTS ON
EAST AND WEST CHANGAN ROAD, WHERE MUCH OF THE
SHOOTING AND CASUALTIES OCCURRED.

SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 3

3. 2230. WHEN THE TIANANMEN STUDENT LOUDSPEAKERS
ANNOUNCED THAT PLA FORCES HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY
TURNED BACK AT JIANGUCHEN, A WAVE OF RELIEF, EVEN A
SENSE OF EUPHORIA, SWEEPED THE CROWD OF 200,000
GATHERED IN TIANANMEN AND ON CHANGAN EAST ROAD.
ABOUT TEN THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS THEN MOVED TO THE
NORTHEAST CORNER OF TIANANMEN SQUARE FOR A VICTORY
RALLY, WITH STUDENT LEADERS GIVING SPEECHES AND
INTRODUCING YAN JIADI, BEI DAO, WANG DAN, HE DAIJIAN,
AND OTHER WELL KNOWN PRO-DEMOCRACY LEADERS TO THE
GATHERING AUDIENCE. SPEAKERS PROCLAIMED "THE PEOPLE
ARE VICTORIOUS," "TODAY IS THE BEGINNING OF DEMOCRACY
IN CHINA," AND "NOW THE PARTY WILL BE REJUVENATED AND
DEMOCRATIZED." MOST OF THE OTHER DEMONSTRATORS BEGAN

4. COMMENT ON ANCITS IN TIANANMEN: AT THIS POINT,
CONOFF RETURNED TO THE BEIJING HOTEL; THERE HE
LEARNED FROM AMEMBASSY THAT A LARGE COLUMN OF APCS
AND TRUCKS WAS APPROACHING TIANANMEN FROM THE WEST.
HE WENT BACK TO THE SQUARE TO FIND AND INFORM ANCITS
AND TO URGE THEM TO LEAVE THE SQUARE IMMEDIATELY. OF
THE 20-25 ANCITS ENCOUNTERED -- MOST TOURISTS OR
STUDENTS -- ALL BUT SEVERAL TELEVISION CAMERAMEN
APPEARED TO HAVE LEFT THE SQUARE AT THAT TIME.
CONTINUING WESTWARD TO XIDAN, CONOFF MET SEVERAL MORE
ANCITS; BY THAT TIME, APCS HAD ARRIVED AND PLA
SHOOTING WAS INTENSE, SO CONOFF LED THESE ANCITS TO
AN ALLEY, WHICH THEY FOLLOWED AROUND TIANANMEN BACK
TO THE BEIJING HOTEL. THUS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF
AMERICAN TELEVISION AND PRESS PERSONNEL, IT APPEARS
THAT VIRTUALLY ALL ANCITS HAD LEFT TIANANMEN BY THE
TIME THE APC COLUMN ARRIVED AT THE SQUARE. END
COMMENT.)

5. 2330. THE SELF-CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES WERE
INTERRUPTED BY AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PLA FORCES "HAVE
REACHED FUXINGMEN." THE RALLY BROKE UP AND THOUSANDS
OF DEMONSTRATORS BEGAN RUNNING WEST TOWARD XIDAN;
THEY RIPPED UP CONCRETE AND METAL ROAD DIVIDERS AND
OVERTURNED TRUCKS AND BUSES TO BUILD BARRICADES.

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 4

6. 2405. A LONE APC SUDDENLY ROARED DOWN WEST
CHANGAN ROAD AT ABOUT 35 MPH, HEADING EAST TOWARD
TIANANMEN. PLOWING THROUGH THE DEMONSTRATORS AND
RUNNING OVER SOME, IT TURNED DOWN THE WEST SIDE OF
THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE (GHOP) AND CAME TO A
HALT AT THE FOOT OF THE GHOP WESTERN STAIRCASE.
THOUSANDS OF ENRAGED DEMONSTRATORS RUSHED AFTER THE
APC, SURROUNDED IT AND HURLED CONCRETE BLOCKS, AND
CLIMBED ON TOP AND POUNDED ON THE METAL WATCH.

7. 2440. AT ZHONGNANHAI, SEVERAL HUNDRED ARMED PLA
INFANTRY STREAMED OUT OF THE LEADERSHIP COMPOUND,
PUSHING DEMONSTRATORS FURTHER OUT INTO THE STREET.

8. 2455. TWO PLA TRUCKS JUST WEST OF ZHONGNANHAI,
CAPTURED AND DISABLED BY DEMONSTRATORS IN THE EARLY
AFTERNOON, WERE RIPPED APART FOR BLOCKADE MATERIAL.
THEN THEY AND SEVERAL CITY BUSES WERE SET ON FIRE.

9. 0100. AT THE CORNER OF NORTH XIANGUA STREET, THE
FIRST DISTANT GUNFIRE COULD BE HEARD IN THE VICINITY
OF THE MINZU HOTEL, A MILE FURTHER TO THE WEST; AN
ORANGE GLOW SPREAD DOWN THE LENGTH OF WEST CHANGAN
ROAD AS BUSES AND TRUCKS WERE OVERTURNED AND BURNED.
THE DENSELY PACKED CROWD AT THIS STREET CORNER
CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND YOUNG
WORKERS. AS THE GUNBOYS GREW LOUDER AND THE FIRST
APC HEADLIGHTS CAME INTO VIEW MOVING SLOWLY EASTWARD,
A FEELING OF RAGE AMONG THE CROWD MOUNTED. "HOW CAN
CHINESE SHOOT CHINESE," CRIED ONE ELDERLY WOMAN. "WE
ARE THE PEOPLE, NOT THEM," A YOUNG MAN SHOUTED
POINTING TO ZHONGNANHAI, "THEY ARE GANGSTERS."

10. 0110. SUDDENLY, A DEEP RUMBLE CAME FROM THE
REAR OF THE CROWD AS IT FACED WEST. THE CROWD FLARED
APART IN TERROR AS THE BATTERED APC FROM THE GHOP
CAREENED BY AT TOP SPEED WESTWARD WITH A FIRE BLAZING
ON TOP. DEMONSTRATORS THREW LARGE CHUNKS OF CONCRETE
AT THE TRACKED WHEELS AND, MANGLED IN DEBRIS, THE APC

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GROUND TO A MALT 200 FEET WEST OF NORTH XINHUA STREET. ENRAGED DEMONSTRATORS CONVERGED ON THE APC, PILED EVERY AVAILABLE SCRAP OF FURNITURE AND WOOD AROUND THE VEHICLE, AND SET IT ON FIRE. AFTER SEVERAL MINUTES, THE WATCH BROKE OPEN AND A SOLDIER JUMPED OUT; THE CROWD GRABBED AND BEAT HIM, APPARENTLY TO DEATH. A SECOND SOLDIER WAS SURROUNDED BY SEVERAL STUDENTS WHO PROTECTED HIM FROM THE ANGRY CROWD, AND A THIRD SOLDIER WAS PULLED OUT DEAD.

11. 0120. ADVANCING APCs ARRIVED AT NORTH XINHUA STREET SPENDING GUNFIRE BEFORE THEM. WITH BULLETS WHIZZING BY AND PEOPLE FALLING TO THE GROUND IN POOLS OF BLOOD, DEMONSTRATORS REALIZED TO THEIR HORROR THAT THE SOLDIERS WERE NOT FIRING BLANKS OR RUBBER BULLETS AND HASTILY RETREATED TOWARD TIANANMEN AND DOWN SIDE STREETS.

12. 0145. THE PLA FORCE REACHED TIANANMEN AND APCs FANDED OUT IN A LINE ACROSS CHANGAN ROAD AT A POINT EVEN WITH THE EASTERN FRONT OF THE GROP. THEY REMAINED THERE UNMOVING, A ROW OF HEADLIGHTS FACING A CROWD OF FIFTEEN THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS ON EAST CHANGAN ROAD.

13. 0155. CONOFF MADE A LAST CIRCUIT THROUGH THE TIANANMEN STUDENT ENCAMPMENT. THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED CITY OF 100 TENTS WAS VIRTUALLY EMPTY. APPROXIMATELY 3800 STUDENTS WERE GATHERED TIGHTLY AROUND THE MONUMENT TO THE REVOLUTIONARY HEROES, WITH A FOREST OF FLAGS AND BANNERS ABOVE THEIR HEADS. THEY WOULD, THEY TOLD CONOFF, STAY AND WAIT FOR THE TROOPS TO ARRIVE.

14. 0205. PLA TROOPS AND APCs IN FRONT OF MAO'S PORTRAIT OPENED FIRE ON THE LARGE CROWD OF DEMONSTRATORS ON CHANGAN ROAD; THE LATTER RETREATED ON THE RUN EASTWARD TOWARD THE BEIJING HOTEL. THERE WERE SCREAMS OF PAIN AS PEOPLE WERE HIT AT RANDOM AND FELL TO THE GROUND. A MAN, WHO HAD JUST SHOUTED TO CONOFF "DO SOMETHING YOU FOREIGNERS MUST HELP US!" FELL WITH A BULLET IN THE CENTER OF HIS FOREHEAD.

15. 0230. A DEADLY PATTERN OF CONFRONTATION ENSUED FOR THE NEXT THREE HOURS ON EAST CHANGAN ROAD BETWEEN TIANANMEN AND THE BEIJING HOTEL. ABOUT ONE HUNDRED PLA SOLDIERS IN PRONE POSITION WERE LINED ACROSS THE STREET NEXT TO THE HISTORY MUSEUM, THEIR RIFLES POINTED TOWARD THE PARALLEL LINE OF DEMONSTRATORS FIFTY YARDS TO THE EAST. EACH TIME THE SOLDIERS OPENED FIRE, THE DEMONSTRATORS BROKE AND RAN FOR WHAT LITTLE COVER WAS AVAILABLE; AFTER A FEW MINUTES, THE DEMONSTRATORS WOULD BEGIN TO RETURN TO THE STREET, PILE BODIES ON PEDICABS, AND REFORM THEIR LINE, UNTIL THE NEXT BARRAGE OF GUNFIRE. WITH EACH VOLLEY, TEN TO FIFTEEN DEMONSTRATORS FELL.

16. 0427. THE LIGHTS OF TIANANMEN, WHICH WENT OFF AT 3:30, CAME BACK ON TO REVEAL AN ARMORY BRISTLING WITH ROW UPON ROW OF APCs, TANKS, AND TRUCKS. THE LIGHTS ALSO REVEALED AT THE NORTHERN END OF THE SQUARE, THE HEAPED REMAINS OF THE "GODDESS OF DEMOCRACY," AND A COLUMN OF SMOKE ROSE ABOVE THE MONUMENT TO THE REVOLUTIONARY HEROES. THE VIEW OF THE SQUARE AND THE MONUMENT WAS BLOCKED BY BUILDINGS, AND THE DEMONSTRATORS, ASSUMING THAT THE GUNFIRE ON THE SQUARE MEANT THE STUDENTS WERE BEING KILLED, CONTINUED THEIR HOPELESS, UNARMED CONFRONTATION AGAINST THE PLA TROOPS.

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17. 0530. A SECOND COLUMN OF ABOUT 50 APCs, TANKS, AND TRUCKS ROARED BY ON EAST CHANGAN ROAD AND ENTERED THE SQUARE FROM THE EAST SIDE. WHEN THE DEMONSTRATORS SHOUTED ANGRILY AT THE VEHICLES, PLA INFANTRY OPENED FIRE WITH TWO JEEP-MOUNTED MACHINE GUNS, LAYING DOWN A BARRAGE THAT LASTED FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES. WHEN THE CARNAGE CEASED, EAST CHANGAN ROAD BETWEEN THE SQUARE AND THE BEIJING HOTEL WAS EMPTY EXCEPT FOR ABOUT 25-30 MOVING AND STILL BODIES. THE DEMONSTRATORS EDGED BACK ON TO THE STREET, LOADED THE DEAD AND WOUNDED ONTO PEDICABS, AND TURNED ONCE AGAIN TO CONFRONT THE LINE OF PLA RIFLEMEN.

18. 0620. A THIRD COLUMN OF ABOUT FORTY APCs, TANKS, AND TRUCKS ROLLED DOWN EAST CHANGAN ROAD FROM THE EAST AND ENTERED TIANANMEN. PLA INFANTRY LAID DOWN A HEAVY TEN-MINUTE BARRAGE OF MACHINEGUN FIRE WITH MANY CASUALTIES.

19. THROUGH BOTH OF THE EAST CHANGAN MASCACRES (5:30 AND 6:20), THE SOOTHING, MELLIFLOUS VOICE BROADCAST OVER THE GOVERNMENT LOUDSPEAKERS ON TIANANMEN CONTINUED TO REASSURE "BEIJING FRIENDS" THAT THE "CHAOS HAS ENDED, ORDER HAS BEEN RESTORED, AND THE KOOKLIGANS HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH."

20. 0730. THE LOUDSPEAKERS WENT SILENT FOR A FEW MOMENTS, THEN THE FAMILIAR STRAINS OF THE UPBEAT CHINESE NATIONAL ANTHEM FILLED THE AIR. HALFWAY THROUGH, THE MUSIC WAS SMOTHERED BY RIFLE FIRE BEHIND THE HISTORY MUSEUM, THEN BY ANOTHER BARRAGE OF MACHINE GUN FIRE DIRECTED AT THE DEMONSTRATORS ON EAST CHANGAN ROAD. WHEN THE ANTHEM CONCLUDED, A SOFT FEMALE VOICE ANNOUNCED, "GOOD MORNING, COMRADES. HAPPILY THE ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN DEFEATED. PEACE IS RESTORED TO OUR BELOVED TIANANMEN SQUARE."
LILLEY

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